

Message Text

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PAGE 01 THE HA 01287 140638Z

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3151

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TAGS: PFOR, PINT, NL, NA, NS

SUBJECT: MINISTER OF REALM AFFAIRS COMMENTS ON
ANTILLES AND SURINAM INDEPENDENCE

REF: A) THE HAGUE 1075 B) THE HAGUE 876

SUMMARY: DURING PRESS CONFERENCE ON RETURN FROM VIST
TO SURINAM AND ANTILLES, MINISTER OF REALM AFFAIRS
DE GAAY FORTMAN SAID 1975 WAS TOO EARLY A DATE FOR
ANTILLES INDEPENDENCE. END SUMMARY.

1. MINISTER DE GAAY FORTMAN RETURNED FROM VISIT TO
ANTILLES AND SURINAM MARCH 12. HE TOLD PRESS AT
AIRPORT THAT ANTILLES, UNLIKE SURINAM, HAD NO FIXED
DATE IN MIND FOR INDEPENDENCE AND THAT IN ANY EVENT
ANTILLES GOVERNMENT CONSIDERED 1975 FAR TOO EARLY FOR
INDEPENDENCE.

2. DE GAAY FORTMAN SAID HE HAD NOT BEEN INFORMED
BEFOREHAND BY PRIME MINISTER DEN UYL ABOUT "REALM
SUMMIT" IN APRIL. THE MINISTER UNDERSTOOD, HOWEVER,
WHY THE PRIME MINISTER WANTED CONFERENCE, ESPECIALLY
AFTER "THE SURPRISING GOVERNMENT DECLARATION IN
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PAGE 02 THE HA 01287 140638Z

SURINAM." DE GAAY FORTMAN SAID THAT THE ANTILLES

PREMIER FIRST LEARNED OF THE SUMMIT CONFERENCE FROM THE NEWSPAPERS. LATER HE RECEIVED A TELEGRAM WITH DETAILS AND AN INVITATION. THE MINISTER NOTED THAT THIS WORK OF THE REALM COMMISSION MUST BE SPEEDED UP DRASTICALLY.

3. REALM AFFAIRS MINISTER SAID WHEN IN SURINAM HE HAD TALKED TO SURINAMESE OPPOSITION LEADER LACHMON. MINISTER SAID, "MY IMPRESSION IS THAT NOW HE IS TAKING INTO ACCOUNT POLITICAL REALITIES." MINISTER SAID HE DID NOT CONSIDER IT ESSENTIAL THAT THE SURINAM BORDER PROBLEM WITH GUYANA BE SOLVED PRIOR TO INDEPENDENCE NOTING BOTH PARTIES HAD KEPT THE BORDER QUESTION ON ICE FOR SEVERAL YEARS. ASKED WHETHER THERE WAS A POSSIBILITY OF AN EXPEDITIOUS BORDER SETTLEMENT, DE GAAY FORTMAN SAID THIS WAS A QUESTION FOR MINISTER VAN DER STOEL.

4. ASKED TO COMMENT ON STATEMENT BY REALM COMMISSION CHAIRMAN PROFESSOR VAN DER HOEVEN THAT SURINAMESE INDEPENDENCE MIGHT REQUIRE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT NECESSITATING DISSOLUTION OF PARLIAMENT AND NEW PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS, DE GAAY FORTMAN (WHO IS CONSTITUTIONAL EXPERT) SAID THIS NOT NECESSARY AND SAID ONLY THING REQUIRED WAS TO CHANGE GEOGRAPHICAL ENUMERATION OF NETHERLANDS REALM IN FIRST ARTICLE OF CONSTITUTION. THIS HAD BEEN DONE WHEN INDONESIA BECAME INDEPENDENT AND LEZER WHEN WEST IRIAN CEDED TO INDONESIA.
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